



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th MPAD)

Burn, baby burn

Pfc. Dennis McCoy, and Pfc. Jeffrey Touissant, from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, step back after igniting refuse outside the first Combat Outpost (COP) in Baghdad Jan. 28. Built approximately three weeks ago in the Ghazaliya district, the COP lacks many of the comforts of well established forward operating bases and camps.

Combat Outpost Soldiers thwart kidnapping, save would-be victim

By Spc. L.B. Edgar
7th MPAD

BAGHDAD - The sounds of muffled screaming and pounding from a car trunk catches the attention of alert troops patrolling the streets. Upon careful inspection of the vehicle, a kidnapped Iraqi is uncovered and liberated from his vehicular confinement.

On the chaotic streets in the Ghazaliya district of Baghdad, victims of violence are common. That's the environment Soldiers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, operate. They help

patrol these streets and man the first Combat Outpost (COP) in Baghdad.

On a disruption patrol the Soldiers of Co. C received fire from a rooftop. They subsequently positively identified the threat and returned fire. After unsuccessfully pursuing their attacker, the platoon leader observed suspicious activity around a car. When the Soldiers approached the vehicle, the suspicious figures surrounding it scattered. AK-47 magazines and black hoods inside the vehicle prompted a thorough search, which revealed its contents: a human being, said Staff Sgt. Shelby Clement, tank commander for Co. C's 2nd Platoon. "In the trunk of the car was an Iraqi

national who had been bound and blindfolded. I'm sure the intent was not good for him," Clement, a native of Hartville, Mo., explained. "This time, we did something and were actually able to save a guy's life."

Every day Soldiers of Baghdad's first and only COP patrol the streets of Ghazaliya, there are opportunities to make a difference in the community, which is home to more than 50,000 people, said Capt. Erik Peterson, the company commander.

"I'm the only COP in Baghdad right now. I'm the first COP in Baghdad," said

Living in the neighborhood has advantages

By 2nd Lt. Mike Daschel
2-12 Cav.

BAGHDAD - Basing Iraqi Army and U.S. troops at an outpost in central Ghazaliya is a first in the Iraqi capital. Combat Outpost (COP) "Casino" has been operating for the past two weeks with Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment.

Being based in Ghazaliya has seen its

share of success stories. Just days after moving in, Cpl. Peter Callahan, a medic, saved the life of a 4-year-old girl who was brought in by her family with a pulse below 40 beats per minute. After checking her wounds and giving her initial aid, Soldiers evacuated the girl and her mother to a medical center for further treatment.

During a patrol in Ghazaliya, Spc. John Laweryson, driving a humvee, spotted suspicious looking vehicle. One of the

men inside was acting strangely.

"I thought either he was wounded, or trying to hide something," Spc. Laweryson said. "The vehicle turned around like they were trying to slip away from our patrol and our guys blocked them. They then scattered on foot and dispersed into a building."

When the vehicle was searched, a kidnap victim was found in the trunk of the car with his hands bound together. He was taken to the outpost. After two days, his father arrived to take him home in a very emotional reunion.

Combat Outpost Casino is surrounded by concrete barriers and includes six houses. Three of the houses belong to the Iraqi Army and three to U.S. forces. Living conditions at the outpost are spartan. Soldiers sleep in crowded rooms with no heating. There is no running water or sewage system, but the troops built outhouses which they service themselves.

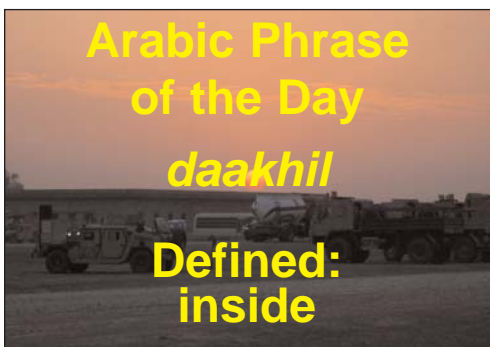
In addition to combat patrols, Soldiers travel to Camp Liberty daily to conduct their own logistical missions.




The combat outpost is a work in progress, waiting for more materials to finish the construction completely; however, it is fully operational.



(Photo by 2nd Lt. Mike Daschel. 2-12 Cav.)

Spc. Robert Thompson, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, from Gastonia, N.C., provides security from a rooftop in Ghazaliya.



Iraq 3-Day Weather Report			
	Today	Tomorrow	Friday
High: 62 Low: 47	High: 61 Low: 43	High: 62 Low: 42	

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Paratroopers trade parachutes for sea legs

By Sgt. Marcus Butler
4-25 Inf. Public Affairs

ISKANDARIYAH, Iraq - Paratroopers from the 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, added another element to its arsenal of maneuver capabilities with the addition of amphibious transportation.

The Scout Platoon for the "Geronimo" Battalion, 1-501st PIR, will utilize this new mode of transportation to conduct reconnaissance throughout their area of operation.

"This new addition gives us the ability to use routes the enemy would not expect us to use," said 1st Lt. Matt Didier, scout platoon leader for the Geronimos.

In addition to opening new routes, the aluminum utility boat can carry a maximum of 15 combat equipped paratroopers versus the five personnel that can be carried in a Humvee.

Since most of the scout's missions are normally all dismounted, the addition of this new mode of transportation was something they had to train for. Though the boat will not replace the humvee, Didier said it will greatly add to our effectiveness.

Before the paratroopers were allowed to participate on missions with the boat, preliminary training involving a swim test and various battle drills had to be completed.

"Each paratrooper had to complete a swim test with full combat gear and learn how enter and exit the boat," said Didier.

"Also, each squad would go over battle drills with reacting to enemy contact and procedures for a downed vehicle."

Before conducting actual missions, the platoon conducted several dry-fire missions to familiarize the paratroopers with water-borne operations.

"For an entire week, our platoon ran training missions along the river to show the paratroopers how to maneuver, control and dock the boats," said Didier.

"It is a very different way to conduct missions for our platoon, but the paratroopers picked up on the training quickly and drove on with the mission without any problems," said Didier. "It is a great asset for our brigade. It is a great tool to help combat the enemy and to help make Iraq a safer place."

Baghdad in Brief

Iraqi Army seizes large cache in Baghdad

BAGHDAD-Iraqi Army troops captured cache of weapons and explosives in the western Baghdad neighborhood Feb. 2.

Working from a tip given to the 6th Iraqi Army headquarters, elements of the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army searched an abandoned house in Kahdra Feb. 2.

Inside the house, the troops found 19 57mm rockets, four rocket-propelled grenade rounds, nine 120mm mortar rounds, five 100mm mortar rounds, three 107mm rockets, five 130mm artillery rounds, nine 122mm artillery rounds, one 152mm artillery round, two 85mm projectiles, one 155mm artillery round, two roadside bomb timers, one mortar tube, five AK-47s and two machine guns.

The former occupants of the house are unknown. The explosives were taken to a U.S. base by EOD for disposal.



(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4-25 Inf. Public Affairs)

Paratroopers from the Scout Platoon, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (ABN), 25th Infantry Division, head out on a training mission on the Euphrates River. The training missions helped the paratroopers get accustomed to water-borne operations.

Alert troopers save a local national

COP

From Page 1

said Peterson, who hails from Chesterton, Ind.

The COP is essentially several homes surrounded by barriers and fortified with concertina wire and thousands of sand bags. Dubbed COP "Casino" because Co. C is known as the "Wild Cards," the outlying base for operations houses U.S. Soldiers as well as Iraqi Army (IA) troops, said Spc. Michael Anderson, the company's radio transmission operator.

Since the coalition moved inside the Ghazaliya community approximately three weeks ago, the residents have been more forthcoming in providing information, either in person or through the local tip line, said the native of Bay Minette, Ala.

"A lot of people have told us they are glad we moved into the neighborhood and they feel safer (since) we are here," Anderson explained. "Since we live here, I think more of them are compelled to come down here."

Every day the Soldiers of Co. C and



Erik Peterson, commander, Co. C, 2nd Bn., 12th Cav. Regt., 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div., talks with an Iraqi man after responding to an attack on an area mosque in Baghdad's Ghazaliya district Jan. 29.



(Photos by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th MPAD)

Sgt. Segrej Michaud, an armorer for Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pulls security on the streets of the Ghazaliya district in Baghdad, Jan. 29. Michaud and his unit responded to an attack on an area mosque.

their Iraqi counterparts are making the COP safer and more livable. As the Soldiers build up the COP, the residents are increasingly aware of its permanence, Clement said.

"I think they're getting more comfortable knowing we're here and we're here for awhile. We're not just going to blow through once in awhile here and not (let them) see our presence," Clement explained. "I think the whole intent is to show our presence in this neighborhood - to get the locals to know we're here to (increase) cooperation with the Iraqi Army."

While the Soldiers are trying to train the Iraqi troops to perform missions independently, they are also trying to improve relations between the residents and their armed forces, Clement said.

To this end, Soldiers are increasingly supporting and advising the IA, Anderson said.

"I see them taking the lead more," Anderson explained. "Before we leave, I can see them being fully functional and being able to do this themselves as long as we continue to work with them and they advance like they have been."

For now, Soldiers patrol the

streets of Ghazaliya daily enforcing the rule of law and improving the capabilities of the IA one step at a time.

"We do want to return and see our loved ones. We know the sooner we can get the situation sorted out, the sooner we can go home. We know it's going to take awhile, so we've got to stick it out longer," Clement said. "As long as we know the people back home care about us, that will keep us motivated."



Pfc. William Davis, and Pfc. John Landry, both with Co. C, 2nd Bn., 12th Cav. Regt., 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div., pull security on a rooftop.

Wild ride nothing new to Ar Ramadi infantryman

By Spc. Courtney Marulli
2-2 Inf. Public Affairs

CAMP CORREGIDOR, Iraq - Dirt trails, hard knocks, broken bones and numerous difficulties are all in a day's work for one Soldier here with 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment. It was that way even before he joined the Army.

Pvt. Douglas R. Meeker, of Miamisburg, Ohio, an infantryman with Company D, has been racing in BMX events for about nine and a half years and isn't going to stop anytime soon.

"BMX will always be there for me," he said. "Even if I'm not competing down the line I'll continue riding." Meeker currently competes at the semi-pro level and plans to go pro when he returns from Iraq.

Skateboarding, rollerblading and BMX racing all have similarities that attract people such as the tricks and style, but BMX racing stood out for Meeker.

"It's the thrill of being able to go out there and learn something new everyday," he said.

Meeker said his interest in BMX racing started back in middle school when he befriended a high school freshman who was a sponsored racer.

"I thought it was the coolest thing," he said. His sponsor, Coastal BMX in Ohio, took Meeker in as an amateur.

"I picked it up real fast," he said.

Practicing in parks and on dirt paths

everyday after school during his freshman year, Meeker started learning freestyle. Meeker said he dedicated every free second he had to riding his bike and perfecting new tricks until it was so dark outside it was hard to see.

"I'll ride until my legs won't allow me to," he said.

Learning tricks is one aspect of BMX racing, but Meeker said good physical conditioning is just as important.

In order to stay in shape, Meeker said he would take his bike to Denver and use the BMX parks there, or he would stay in the Colorado Springs area and ride to buildup his endurance. "You're using every-



(Courtesy photo)

Pvt. Douglas R. Meeker, with Co. D, 1st Bn., 9th Inf. Regt., competes in BMX events and hopes to turn professional when he returns from his current deployment to Iraq.

thing on a bike," he said. "You have to be in pretty good condition to keep going fast for the 30 to 60 second run."

Meeker said one of the things he loves about BMX racing is the supportive environment. He said there are racers who will take you under their wing and show you new tricks, while others will give you a hard time, although they also congratulate you when you complete a run.

"I guess it's more or less the thrill," he said. "You can go out and ride some of the same stuff on a skateboard or rollerblades, but you can go faster and get height."

As with everything, there is the risk of seriously getting hurt.

"If you mess up, there's no going back," he said. "You're going down hard and going to get hurt."

Aside from the thrill he receives from competing, Meeker said he also enjoys teaching the next generation of BMX competitors.

During his junior year of high school, both of his little brothers started to ride. He helped them, but also extended his knowledge to anyone who wanted to learn. Meeker said he used to take his brothers and other children between the ages of 10 and 13 down to the local park and show them some beginner level stunts.

For those who want to get started in the sport, Meeker has some advice.

"Always try and pursue your goal until you learn it."

TELEVISION



	8:00p.m.	8:30p.m.	9:00p.m.	9:30p.m.	10:00p.m.	10:30p.m.	11:00p.m.
AFN sports	College Football	The Sports List	The Hot List		NFL Live	Jim Rome is Burning	Around the Horn
AFN prime ATLANTIC	I vs 100		Without a Trace		Headline News	Tonight Show with Jay Leno	
AFN news	Fox News Live		Studio B		The Situation Room		The Situation Room